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In the first place they protest strenuously against confounding the Direct with the Natural Method, as a now homeless waif was dubbed by a couple of peripatetic instructors of French and German about a third of a century ago.

In Germany, France, England, and Scandinavia the Direct Method is the prevalent one today. As it is conceived of and used there, it includes (1) Making the start in the foreign language with easy texts. The procedure generally in use in Latin and Greek is eschewed because it is thought to make of the pupil a word-student. The mother tongue and translation are not banished from the class-room but are used sparingly. (2) Thorough teaching of grammar, although partially inductively and in small installments. The ability to read is the chief aim, while whatever conversational ability is achieved is considered a valuable by-product. Strict drill in phonetics is not insisted on by many teachers, even in Europe. This method, it has been shown<sup>1</sup>, is used also in 5 plus % of the Colleges and Universities in the United States.

However, the grammar-reading-conversation method is today the most common method in the United States, and tends, as the teachers are able, to approximate a direct method. It consists in making a start with the grammar in English. Reading forms the center of instruction with conversational ability as a third object. The texts are in great part discussed in the foreign language and only the most difficult portions are translated.

The grammar-translation method, which, unfortunately, is still used a good deal in America, aims to teach by means of paradigms and set translation after the time-honored fashion in the Classics, and is, I am happy to note, but for its honored advocates' sake sorry to state, slowly falling into harmless desuetude.

CHARLES H. HANDSCHIN.

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The main reason why the Direct Method is now being discussed and advocated is the realization that the old procedure and order of things are insufficient and incapable of doing what they should do. Grammar, translation, reading, or other methods—call them what you like—that have carefully avoided the spoken word or reduced it to a minimum in the actual class-room instruction have diligently led the student away from an intimate feeling for the language. He has covered a deal of ground in reading, but has never learned the language, for by learning is meant not one phase but the totality that gives him *Sprachgefühl*. I take it, no teacher will quarrel with this ideal of instruction that makes *Sprachgefühl* a vital and paramount issue. And yet in actual practice, the word *Sprach-*

*gefühl* has received a very inadequate interpretation. The Direct Method at once vitalizes this ideal by insisting that ear and speech receive their due share of attention. In other words, though speaking and hearing the language spoken do not necessarily become absolute ends in themselves, they are a very essential means to bring about a *Sprachgefühl*.

There is no reason for a suspicious attitude toward the Reform Movement. It is the result of recent scientific inquiry into the processes of learning a language and has, therefore, no apologies to make. Why there should be any opposition is hardly clear. It may be from the old tradition that ability to speak a language is equal to shallow dilettantism, or it may be from an indisposition to give up the complacent, comfortable way of the old order, or it may be from a doubt as to the workableness of the Direct Method. With regard to the last point, it must be remembered that the ideals of accuracy and thoroughness are not given up, but that they become vitalized and quickened. And if it is not possible to *cover the ground* as formerly, the returns are *quality*. A word from Goethe applies here also: "Das Was bedenke, mehr bedenke Wie".

My own experience of many years leads me to the strong conviction that if German is a modern living language, then I am by the facts in the case obliged to teach it as such, and the Direct Method becomes at once an economical as well as an efficient means of reaching that end.

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HERMANN ALMSTEDT.

I have read with interest the papers and letters on the Direct Method of teaching Latin which have been appearing in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. It was not my intention to intervene, because the matter is best left to be solved by experience, now that a number of teachers in America are actually using it with great satisfaction to themselves, and still greater satisfaction to their pupils. I hope some of these will speak out before long; but I must send you a few words on Mrs. Peck's letter (page 70).

This letter shows a confusion which is only too familiar to me; it confuses Direct Method with conversation on modern inventions. Now the Direct Method may be used throughout school life with no reference to modern inventions, or to anything so distinctly modern that it cannot be expressed in good Latin words. Thus the elements of Latin grammar may be used in a series of bodily movements, in which we do exactly the same as the Romans did. The class may speak and write about nature, birds and animals, mountains and valleys and rivers, in words used by the Romans for those same things. Fables and stories may be told to modern children in the same words that the Romans heard for the same stories.

By and by the vocabulary of Caesar and Vergil may be used to some extent, and those authors may be read and explained in their own language. Thus the pupil may be led to read and understand, to

<sup>1</sup> Compare C. H. Handschin, *The Teaching of Modern Languages in the United States*, United States Bureau of Education (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1912).

appreciate and enjoy the message that the Romans have left to the world, and all without once thinking of a bicycle.

Whether Latin can be used as a business *lingua franca*, as it once was, having words for bicycles amongst other things, is a different question, to be judged on its own merits. If it should be so used, its style would be to the scholar's Latin very much what business English is to the cultivated man's English; and no teacher would dream of using it in his teaching, any more than he would use the language of the invoice or the advertisement in an English essay or poem.

The Direct Method in language teaching is liable to abuse, but it is not reasonable to assume that an abuse is the method, especially if it cannot be shown that the abuse is practised by those who practise the method. This abuse is not practised by anyone known to me who practises the Direct Method. And it should be noted that the Direct Method for Modern Languages is no longer on trial: as a principle, it is now taken for granted by all who know the facts, and the points at issue are, how far it is useful to assist it by formal grammar and translation. On these points there is a difference of opinion which decreases as experience is collected and used.

I believe that the real cause of most of the opposition we meet is, that teachers unconsciously shrink from the trouble of change. This is very natural, and it is troublesome to change; but any trouble is worth taking if it will improve our work. This particular change is like the change from slavery to freedom or from night to day; and I can assure Mrs. Peck and any who have her misgivings that the daylight will banish that nightmare bicycle.

W. H. D. ROUSE.

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### ROGER ASCHAM ON THE DIRECT METHOD

Advocates of the Direct Method deny every implication of faddism and novelty by citing the familiar words of Comenius (1592-1670): *Omnis lingua usu potius discitur quam praeceptis, id est audiendo, legendo, relegendo, imitationem manu et lingua temptando.*

It is interesting to note, however, that there were divergent views on the subject among classicists of the period. Good old Roger Ascham, in his quaint and learned *Scholemaster* (1570), openly condemns the *viva voce* use of Latin in vogue in certain quarters of England:

"Yet all men couet to haue their children fpeake latin: and so do I verie earnestlie too. We bothe, haue one purpofe: we agree in desire, we with one end: but we differ fomewhat in order and waie, that leadeth rightlie to that end. Other would haue them fpeake at all aduentures: and, so they be fpeakinge, to fpeake, the Master careth not, the Scholer knoweth not, what. This is, to feeme, and not to bee. . . I wifh to haue them fpeake fo, as it may well appeare, that the braine doth gouerne the tonge, and that reason leadeth forth the taulke. . . For, good vnderstanding muft first be bred in the childe, which, being nurifhed with fkill, and vfe of writing . . . is the onelie waie to bring him to iudgement and readineffe in fpeaking: and that in farre fhorter time . . . than he shall do, by common teachyng of the common fcholes in England".

In the second book he returns to the attack upon "learning without a booke", as he characterizes the *viva voce* or Direct Method. I quote again his quaint but forceful English (the Italics are mine):

"I remember, whan I was yong, in the North, they went to the Grammar fchole, litle children: they came from thence great lubbers: alwayes learning, and litle profitng: learning without booke, euery thing, vnderftandyng with in the booke, litle or nothing. *Their whole knowledge, by learning without the booke, was tied onelie to their tong and lips, and neuer afcended vp to the braine and head, and therefore was fone fpitte out of the mouth againe*".

The chief defects of the Direct Method as advocated today seem to be as follows:

(1) Through its scope for motor-activity as well as its appeal largely through objective stimuli it is virtually restricted to comparatively young pupils.

(2) It fails to distinguish between a literary language like classical Latin and Greek and a living or spoken language like French.

(3) It largely divorces the study of Latin and English by minimizing the importance of oral and written translation, in an attempt to make the pupil think directly through the medium of the Latin. It thus defeats one of the main aims of Latin in the modern High School curriculum, i.e. to awaken the linguistic consciousness of the student by furnishing him a foundation for the formal study of grammar. Word-derivation, the logical analysis of sentence-structure, together with the subtle distinctions in word-order and emphasis required in translation, make it a fine art as well as an invaluable training for every student. It should at least be something more than an incident, a 'by-product', so to speak, of Latin teaching.

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In *The School Review* for January, 1913 (21.67-69), Professor C. J. Cipriani, of the University of Chicago, in a review of a book entitled *Short Stories for Oral French*, by Anna W. Ballard, says (the Italics are mine):

"The very commendable purpose of the book greatly overshadows in interest the merit of the book itself, *since the reform method is almost new in this country*, and its successful introduction would most assuredly mean a step in advance on the road of educational progress. But just here, perhaps, a word of caution may be in order. Not until experiments in progressive education are attended with the scientific thoroughness and preparation that attend, e.g. the experiments in progressive agriculture, will they give lasting and conclusive results. The reform method, so successfully used in Germany (and some other European) schools, presupposes for this success conditions that do not generally obtain in American schools, some, indeed, that are actually 'antagonistic' to the usual methods employed there".

Professor Cipriani then points out that, by the method prescribed by Miss Ballard for the use of her book, most of the work would be done in the class-room. By her system, as by the system in use in Germany, the average amount of time "profitably devoted" to preparation for each recitation period would not exceed half an hour. He then says:

"The American school-system, on the contrary, presupposes, for each forty or forty-five minute